

"The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire."

Malcolm Gladwell



The OCBI Tipping Point

Volume I

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Welcome to our new weekly e-Newsletter called "The OCBI Tipping Point." We hope that you find it very informative as we explore all possibilities to keep our constituency and the general public informed about all matters that affect Blacks in the state of Iowa.

For starters, we know that the rollout of the OCBI is ambitious and intensive work, to say the least. However, we know that it is possible, and more importantly, it is necessary. So we will continue pushing! This week, I just want to acknowledge the work that the Cedar Rapids Education Task Force has completed, with budget and all—great work! When reports get done, we get inspired. This allows us to maintain all of the zest we had at adolescence. In fact, we intend to make a special effort to reach our young people in more exciting and meaningful ways.

In his book Democracy Matters, Cornel West notes that "the [B]lack freedom struggle and the anti-war movement in the 1960s were largely sustained owing to [young people's] vision and courage." He adds, "**As older folk become jaded, disillusioned, and weary, the lively moral energy of reflective and compassionate young people can play a vital role in pushing democratic momentum.**" And, of course, West is not talking about party affiliation here, but rather about a politics "that is not about winning a political game but about producing better lives."

It could be their honest yet penetrating questioning that reminds those of us who are young in heart and mind of the infinite possibilities on the horizon; or it could be their zest for life, their abundant energy, their innocence, that disrobes some of us of our crippling cynicism and allows the "emotional optimist" in each of us to come glaring through.

*“Dialogue with
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revolution;”*



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This week I had the privilege of speaking with two very bright, young Black students who are a part of the NAACP Youth Council in Des Moines. As I engaged in conversation with them and learned of their dreams and aspirations for their individual lives--but also their hopes for the collective lives of friends, family members, and other loved ones-- Cornel West's words rang with the immediacy of a needle piercing through my skin and caused me to jump to attention: "the lively moral energy of reflective and compassionate *young people* can play a vital role in pushing democratic momentum."

We need as many of our young people to participate in The Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa (OCBI) initiative as possible. The OCBI is designed to help us produce better lives for *all* of us--both the mature and the young of our communities. If our young people can, indeed, push democratic momentum and help us in this endeavor to effectuate positive change in Black Iowa, our young folk should be engaged at every opportunity. It could be their honest yet penetrating questioning that reminds those of us who are young in heart and mind of the infinite possibilities on the horizon; or it could be their zest for life, their abundant energy, their innocence, that disrobes some of us of our crippling cynicism and allows the "emotional optimist" in each of us to come glaring through. For so long we have talked about our *pain*, both personal and collective, but rarely do we have sustained conversations--frequent parties and get-togethers even-- where we talk about our *plan*. Perhaps our young people--*our babies*--will help steer us to engage the OCBI Initiative and work to make our communities better.

Life is short. Time is precious. We must love each other to a higher level of excellence. If the educational activist Paulo Freire is right, that "dialogue with people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution;" and then the OCBI work, in order to be effective across the state, depends on authentic dialogue to cross generational, class, and territorial boundaries within our communities; then I dare say that the Revolution has begun!

The Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa: Helping the Culver/Judge Administration Create
One Iowa with One Unlimited Future